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To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to submit the following testimony as a Danbury, CT resident and a board member of a grassroots non-profit organization - CT Turning To Youth and Families - who is extremely concerned about access to care. In recent legislative sessions both New York State and Massachusetts both passed COMPREHENSIVE substance use treatment reforms that included insurance reform as well as provider reform due to the opiate epidemic. Ensuring treatment providers do not discriminate against those who are trying to access care is a positive step, but if we do not tackle the root of the problem - discriminatory (and sometimes illegal) private insurance management of substance use treatment benefits - then we would be failing to address the true access issue.

What Should Be In Any Act To Increase Access To Substance Use Treatment In CT:

- A licensed health provider (MD, LADC, MSW, CASAC, etc.) should be able to write a prescription for any level of substance use treatment and/or recovery support services to an insured patient with those benefits that acts as meeting their medical necessity criteria as outlined in their benefits from their carrier (modeled by PA Act 106).

Current CT Environment:

- Access to addiction treatment and recovery support services through private insurance is incredibly difficult in CT. The majority of residents with private insurance are forced to seek care outside of CT due to stringent management of insurance benefits.
- 151 Opioid Deaths in first 6 months of 2014. In 2013, this number was 98 for the same 6 months. In 2012, the number for the entire year was 174. During the first 168 days of last year, an average of one person per day died from opioid use in the Nutmeg State – there is a growing group of families of loss and people in recovery who have had enough.

The conclusive results of CT's shortcomings for meeting the needs of this population is found throughout the comprehensive, newly released 2013 Legislative Program Review & Investigations

Report of the Adolescent/Young Adult SUD System in CT: http://www.cga.ct.gov/pri/2012_atsu.asp.
This study resulted in the unanimous legislative support of H.B. 5373 ultimately vetoed in the 2014 session.

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Board Member

Connecticut Turning to Youth and Families

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